

**RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT
1995-1996**

The Rare Book and Manuscript Library experienced a busy year. FY1996 was characterized in part by the construction that promises to transform our space and procedures and in part by a number of successful efforts to branch out into new areas of service and activity. RBML launched a digital imaging project on the Web, made several significant additions to its collections, carried on a full exhibition and lecture schedule, and with the help of faculty from a variety of departments, developed several classroom presentations and lectures using rare materials, resulting in an increase of nearly 300% in class use of the collections. Books, manuscripts and other objects were loaned to at least six major museum or library exhibitions. With the help of a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and an additional grant from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, a project to process and rehouse the Joseph Urban archives was begun, a project which will be, we hope, the model for subsequent work with our theater collections.

Internally, RBML streamlined the handling of reference letters and made some progress on a collections inventory project that had been started last year. Manuscript staff members received training from the Library Systems Office in the use of HTML and began the task of transforming our finding aids into nationally accessible resources via the World Wide Web. The papers of six New York City settlement houses were received and processed on site by means of a grant from the NHPRC, and a catalog of the Boris Sapir collection, long underway, was finally completed.

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In the late fall, work began on three additional projects: replacement of the light fixtures throughout RBML (including those within the exhibition cases), repair of the HVAC system in the Reading Rooms and reference area (still incomplete), and construction of the new seminar room and processing space that is due to open in October 1996.

Butler renovation projects which affected RBML space included the construction of risers and the addition of electrical boxes in the stacks. Preparations were undertaken to allow for the construction of a new entrance into Room 654, the staff entrance.

Other changes in space and configuration include the transformation of rooms 602 and 603 into, respectively, the Papyrus Reading Room and the papyrus/ostraka cataloging space, the reconfiguration of room 645 into air-conditioned storage space for Yiddish language tapes, and the

remodeling of room 614 into a patron locker room, with coin-operated storage.

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A catalog of the Boris Sapir collection was completed and submitted for publication. Work on the Joseph Urban collection was begun, thanks to funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the project to catalog the Plimpton collection of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts was continued. Processing of the first segment of grant files from the Carnegie Corporation's original transfer of records to Columbia was completed and substantial progress made on the second segment.

788 books and 1,948 manuscript items were added to the collection. Of these, 78 books and 25 lots of books, papers, and manuscripts were purchased by means of endowed or departmental funds. Among the most interesting of the latter were groups of papers from Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, Jack Kerouac, Siegfried Sassoon, the physicist and inventor Nikola Tesla, W.H.Auden, novelist Irving Stone, and British playwright Giles Cooper. Payments were made on the archives of John Howard Griffin and Tennessee Williams, whose papers had been received in 1994.

Two of the largest and most impressive additions to the collection were the archives of Group Research, Inc., which includes books, periodicals, research files, and subject files relating to the growth of radical conservative political organizations in the United States since 1963 and the combined papers of six New York City settlement houses (1891-1994), including the East Side House, Union Settlement Association, and Goddard-Riverside Community Center. The settlement house papers, which add to our rich collection of social work materials, were processed on site by means of a grant administered by the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College and paid for by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

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Exhibitions

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The Alphabet in History and Imagination, although it was already up at the beginning of FY1996, brought a large number of viewers into the Rare Book and Manuscript Library during the summer months. Thames and Hudson, publishers of the book by Johanna Drucker (formerly on the Columbia Art History faculty) upon which the exhibition was based, sponsored a reception in the library.

The Tall Swift Shadow of a Ship at Night: Stephen and Cora Crane opened in November in the Kempner Gallery. Stanley Wertheim, author of *The Crane Log*, worked with Exhibitions Curator Claudia Funke, in assembling materials for the exhibition, which was organized in honor of the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Red Badge of Courage*.

Professor Wertheim offered a special gallery talk to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library Associates.

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Three exhibits occupied the smaller spaces of the West Gallery: *Richard Wagner: Four Columbia Collections*, which was organized to coordinate with an October symposium on Wagner in America and curated by Elizabeth Davis of the Music Library, along with other outside experts; *John Jay*, an exhibition of original and manuscript materials in conjunction with the University celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jay's birth; and *The Book and the Arts in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, curated by Columbia and NYU art history graduate students to coincide with the 8th biennial interdisciplinary conference on Netherlandic studies.

Loans

Items from the collection were loaned to the following institutions for exhibition: Three pamphlets to an exhibition on the Reconstruction era at the Virginia Historical Society; Figures and models from the set designs for *Four Saints in Three Acts* to the Whitney Museum for a Florine Stettheimer retrospective; drawings of and by literary figures from the Beat generation, also to the Whitney, for an exhibit entitled *Beat Culture and the New America*; two large puppets of Oedipus and Jocasta to the Performing Arts Research Center of the New York Public Library for an exhibition at Lincoln Center, *Performing Objects*; an epigraphic specimen to *Sacred Realm*, an exhibit of religious objects at the Yeshiva University Museum; books and manuscripts to the Grolier Club for two

exhibitions, one in honor of the Keats bicentennial, one honoring World War II poets.

Classes

Over fourteen hundred students attended sixty classes on the premises of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library this year where they had the opportunity to examine and study items from the RBML collections. The following classes were particularly exciting: Professor Simon Schama of the Art History department met his class here several times in the fall semester to study prints by Hogarth and Daumier; in the spring he returned with a graduate class to examine our Ruskin and Turner drawings and proof engravings. Eric Foner's American History students came to learn about the resources in the collection in the fall and Joseph O'Connor's art history graduate seminar on Borromini and Bernini met in RBML in the spring. Pat Cahill's freshman class in Logic and Rhetoric learned about contrasting concepts of value and worth from studying photographs and archival material and Martin Elsky's graduate English class studied 16th and 17th century commonplace books and printed editions.

The most intensive use of the collections was by the graduate seminar in Latin paleography taught by Professor Carmela Franklin of the Department of Classics and Consuelo Dutschke, the Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. This group of 20 students met weekly in the Rare Book Reading Room, where they were presented with a variety of original materials and primary sources for analysis. In conjunction with the course, a special database of 100 images from the collection was mounted on ColumbiaWeb, to be used on student projects and for home study.

Other Events

In addition to the opening receptions for each of the exhibitions, the Rare Book and Manuscript Library Associates were offered a gallery talk by Stanley Wertheim describing the Stephen Crane exhibition, a talk on novelist Dawn Powell whose collection is on deposit here, and a slide lecture, "The Book of the Heart," by Eric Jager, of the Columbia English department.

Jean Ashton
August, 1996

Annual Report--Medieval and Ren. MSS--draft
22 July 1996

The fiscal year July 1995-June 1996 represents a period of branching out in the medieval sector of RBML. Internally, we attempted our first major purchase in the field since 1967: after consultation with faculty and examination of both our strengths and weaknesses in legal materials, manuscript and incunabula, we determined to bid on a thirteenth century codex of Gregory IX, Decretals; the book in fact went at auction for twice its estimated price and we were not able to secure it, but we recognize that growth in this field will come about slowly, and such attempted purchases at international auctions as well as feelers put out with various dealers in the United States will eventually locate manuscripts appropriate to our collection and our budget.

We have continued our strong efforts to integrate RBML into Columbia's academic community; in particular during spring term we hosted a graduate course in Latin paleography taught entirely in RBML, utilizing our own medieval manuscripts, the printed reference collection, and the expertise of our med.-ren. curator, who was co-instructor together with Carmela Franklin of the Classics Department. RBML's Donors Room was also the site for the first time of a Ph.D. orals examination: as paleography was one of the student's two major fields, the exam was held here so the student could be tested on her skills in localizing, dating and reading using original leaves from our study collection.

RBML's first experiment in digitization also utilized our medieval holdings: we selected 100 already extant slides of our manuscripts; three private individuals donated the necessary \$400 for the production of a photo-CD; in January the Library's Nicholas Uglov mounted the images on the net. Our images have in the past month been "unlocked" from Columbia-only access, and we are now represented on the World Wide Web in one of the largest to-date medieval series, of overall very good quality, and the best intellectual access points (by call number, by date, by country, by author/title).

Our 100 images on the net were an intentional test to ourselves as we head into a much larger digitizing project, run jointly with the University of California, Berkeley, to be funded by the Mellon Foundation. We now are in a much firmer position to understand the kinds of photography necessary and the demands that such images need to satisfy.

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August, 1996

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CWD

Charges. NO. of items
given to reader

Renewals — when readers
come back

Discharges — reshelf
collection

Annual Report

Administration:

Estelle Raboni - replaced by Rosalinda Bautista
Gwynedd Cannon - Maya Bernstein, Christopher Sawyer
Ling replaced by Tanya

Capital Improvements

Installation of new security system
Preliminary work on Butler renovation
Rebuilding of HVAC system
Relamping of exhibition cases
Building of new seminar/reading room

4,606 — Collection Use:
~~4,598~~ — reader visits — no. of people
2,614,884 — manuscript — no. of items used
15,320 — rare books — charges + renewals
400,575 — bakhmeteff — no. of items
21,697 — photocopy exposures
136,507 — circulation statistics (Charges 110,437; renewals - 26,070)
60 — other
Classes (Sessions in lib. + classes in lib., 1430 attendance)

MSS/Bakhmeteff = 2,201
RBX = 2,405
4,606

Collection Development:

1948 items — Manuscripts/archives:

— linear feet
Group Research, Inc.
Settlement Houses
Tim Page gift
other

78 — Books purchased (see attached from Rudolph)

788* — Books/Gifts received/Transfers, etc.

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1,338 — P-slips — 247 Scores added
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— number of manuscript items processed — 292 Dealer/Auction catalogs
inventories

Special Projects

mounting images on web
finding aids
lectures
sapir catalogue
Exhibitions:

AIGA
Stephen Crane
Literary Posters

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87 items conserved in-house

* 788 includes books received, purchased (78 by RE), transfers, + purchased on non departmental funds.

Rose - for Jean

95-96

78 books purchased

25 lots of letters & ms
including final payment
on Griffin.

letters include Nicholas I

Kerouac, T. Williams

Sasson Blunden

Auden, Irving Stone

Giles Cooper Group Research

See Acquisitions file 'Dealer Descriptions
95-96 for books etc.

62 orders prepared for above

Other things

Collection of Medieval Ms. Images
Clemens et al description sheet
on net

Rudolf